

1/26/67

Dear Mel,

Writing in the heat of emotion is perhaps unwise, but you have never known me when I was not candid and I like you too much to address you any other way. I make no effort to hide my disappointment over your recent treatment of me, my dismay at your not keeping your word, which you did me in an offer I did accept, and at an assortment of other injustices that are not fancied.

That I am bitter at Lane's profit at my expense I do not hide. Without so intending, you were the first to make it possible, as I have known for a while and as Jack Fuchsburg confirmed last Wednesday night during an interlude on the Barry Gray show. Mansdorf did not represent the Trial Lawyers's Association, according to Fuchsburg, who said that he had decided to send no one from the association to the Burke show. It is my understanding, not denied by Arthur Cohen and in a sense confirmed by him, that Mansdorf is associated with Holt, Lane's publisher. This makes a remarkably unethical situation. I do not know if you will ever understand what that night cost me. As you know, I am happy at the way it worked out and believe it had importance.

Now it is I, and to the best of my knowledge I alone who challenged all the lawyers, and you accepted that. They did not, yet they willingly debate Lane and have. While Liebler was telling you he could not appear on this show because Lane is on ~~xxx~~ it, he did not cancel a public debate with Lane in California. I appeared at your place at the appointed time and no one else was there because none of you had informed me the lawyers would not debate me, if it meant giving up their own show. At that time you promised me a show against Nizer, promised to pay me for it, and I accepted, and everything I have done then has been conditioned upon this. As I turned down an offer for a show that would have conflicted with the December show I have declined others since that night, have held Dell off once they got interested, and delayed responding to the TOR invitation for the full day I tried to get in touch with you without success.

After you promised me this Nizer show you then invited Lane on it. Paul tells me this is because he is a "personality". That might be true on other stations, but it is not on yours. Now you have made it a Lane show for reasons that do not make sense to me.

I wrote you and told you that only those with the most intimate knowledge of the subject matter, which with all respect I tell you neither any of you nor David Schoenbrun is, can detect the nonstop flow of lies that come from Louis Nizer, whose sole interest in this matter is the promotion of his new book. The consequence of this is to spread before the public an astounding amount of misinformation that with what I believe to be involved in this subject is a great disservice to things I have every confidence you believe in. Proof of this, to me, is Paul's constructive criticism that when I got the mike on the Deane show I failed to answer the immediately preceding falsehood. There are several things involved here aside from my emotions and the difficulty with which I control them under these circumstances. One is how one performs under pressure. Another is editorial judgment: what to answer. And this is the point I tried to make to Paul on the phone a short while ago and to you in the letter. Without the most rigorous kind of control by an informed moderator, there is nothing that can be done to control so unscrupulous a man short of constant interruption. The choice is the widespread dissemination of seriously wrong information, and that is the choice you have elected.

Now it may be that in responding to Nizer I selected the wrong things in what part of the time I had. I want to call to your attention that the time was not given to me - I had to take it. I also want to ask you if you have ever seen me verbose on the air? Perhaps not to best advantage, but I used every little bit of time I could get and I think without the wasting of many words. Yet because he is so slick, so glib, so competent in his dishonesty and so practised, most of his falsehood went unchallenged and a rather large number of people have been seriously misinformed about a touchstone issue.

You may have forgotten but I have not. Once before there was a glib liar who Lane confronted. You were there, and it was Jerry Cohen. Did Lane undertake to stop this flow of information that was wrong or did I have to do it all? And Jerry Cohen is no Louis Nizer, though he knows much more about the subject. Others also have confronted him. But never before has a station done what WOR did after the show was on, doubled its length and decided immediately to pre-empt a night for it. Do you think this was Sauvage? It was hardly Nizer, for they knew what he was. The drama and impact that show had I gave it.

Perhaps you are so busy you forget the promises you make. I do not for one minute believe you make them without intending to keep them. Yet the result of this whole series of events is hurtful and costly to me, and I alone of those on my side am not in a position to afford it, for I am yet many thousands in debt.

On the "special", you will recall that you promised me an identification on the program. With a private printing and a book generally not available that was the only thing close to personal profit I could get of it. Then you did not in all those hours do anything and I had to improvise it at the very end when Bishop also failed to after my several nudges, you cut that out because it seemed like a commercial. Perhaps it did, but it needn't have been done that way. In any event, you again put me in the position of selling the product of my competitors Lane and Sauvage whose books were generally available when mine was not. You also promised me, and again I have no doubt you have forgotten, that were this show to be syndicated I'd have some compensation from it. And look at that show from my position: I open up this subject, and especially for you and in a very dramatic way, and then you give my competitors the benefit of it. This may not have been your intent, but it was the result.

My point on Lane addressed itself to your deficiencies. I avoid public criticism of him and what I have to say I said in WHITEWASH II. But you put me in the position of the raped woman who finds herself charged as an attractive nuisance. Aside from the numerous dishonest things he and his publisher have done to me, when we were together on your show and we had an advance agreement of who would do what, you allowed him to do what I was to have done and allowed him to take over what I was doing, such as with the Altgens picture, and this was not all. This sort of thing may not be of significance to you, but you can, I am sure, understand its significance to participants. He did not invent upstaging. He does it, he did it, and no one spoke to Bishop about it but me and he ignored that.

So far as "intemural fights" are concerned, Paul should remember that I almost didn't appear on the special in an effort to avoid it, because I know as you do not that he is a crook who cannot help getting on. I then knew the value of TV exposure, yet I was willing to give it up to avoid this kind of conflict. So now you tell me it is the interest of the crook that are to be defended and not those of the robbed. You know I would do and say nothing to him unless he pulls this kind of stuff. You know I didn't do anything when on your show he did just that. And I have gone all around defending other things he has done - I alone defended him on the charge of literary scavenger -

as I also did on several things on the Capitol taping from which they took a single ~~misquoting~~ contrary thing out of context and used it. These are strange standards and ethics.

With all you have an exaggerated opinion of Lane's knowledge of the subject matter. Sure, he'll be able to spot Nizer's more outrageous lies, and if he has the stomach, will do something about some of them. But most of them you will be unaware of and too many Lane will also. Or do you not remember the one part of the special when I could restrain myself no longer and called him on gross inaccuracy on one of the basic points of the whole story, the autopsy notes: You should not have forgotten it; for the subsequent editing, not matter from what problems or motivations (and I impute none evil) was remarkably unfair to me and overly kind to Lane and Bishop. On this subject that is the most serious kind of misinformation.

It is in no way my fault that we have not been able to discuss any of the things you may have had in mind or that I wanted to discuss with you, for I did try to get in touch with you as late as 10 o'clock at night the day you said you wanted to see me and several times the next day, after the taping with Nizer.

You know, it is funny, but with all the appearances I have made, there have been but two in which I have been cast by the format and the other participants in this unwelcome role outside of yours. One was the recent thing with Nizer, the other was on Long John with Lasky and O'Dougherty, and is anything else possible with that combination? I sit for hours and discuss this matter quietly and understate it. You put too high a premium on integrity, even though you do not so intend.

Your ~~misleading~~ motives I do not question. I have the high regard for you that I have reflected. I have tried to treat you fairly, declining competitive offers when I need them so much and wasting what for me is much time and money. You alone had an advance copy of WHITEWASH II, for whatever good it could do you. I am sorry that I feel I must complain about the hurt you have done and are now doing me. To fail to do so is to be dishonest. Because I think you are anything but a whore I again emphasize the damage to something I think important I believe as a consequence you are about to do. If as I am convinced this is the inevitable consequence, it will do little good to regret it later.

All we can now hope for is Jerry Cohen's luck shot hitting Lane that night so he can play over his head. I've heard him on these things. I have a tape of a debate he had with Liebel in California with Epstein to help him. He did miserably, even Epstein doing 100% better. The debate at the AF editors was of the same character. This is why I dropped what I could have done with WHITEWASH II here on the east coast and immediately upon its release, without compensation of any kind or ~~any~~ the refund of expenses went out to California at the importunings of his friends, strangers to me, to bail him out. Of course, in doing this I was also helping what I want to help, but it is his failures that made it necessary.

I have not yet received the check for my expenses in early December that you said you'd repay. As I recall it, they came to about \$75.00.

Sincerely,